



DOSSIER DE PRENSA

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Service Leaders from around the World and Spain Launch Civic Engagement Initiatives in Spain Madrid Becomes Second International City to Join Cities of Service

March 30, 2012, Madrid— The U.S. Embassy in Spain, the Rafael del Pino Foundation, and the Meridian International Center gathered more than 200 service and volunteering leaders from Spain, the U.S., and other nations in Madrid to share ideas and generate concrete solutions to promote service in Spain. The first global service leadership summit of its kind, the Summit was designed to promote volunteerism as one solution for addressing basic challenges faced by communities in Spain, the U.S., and other countries. The event received broad support and participation from the Spanish and U.S. governments, non-profit organizations, and the private sector. It also resulted in the launch of several important initiatives, including the announcement by Madrid's mayor that Madrid would become the second international City of Service.

Statements from Key Participants

The Crown Prince of Spain, His Royal Highness the Prince of Asturias, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, Ann Stock, Ana Mato, Spanish Minister of Health, Social Services, and Equality, Esperanza Aguirre, President Comunidad de Madrid, Jonathan Greenblatt, Director of the White House Office of Social Innovation, Kris Balderston, Special Representative for Global Partnerships, U.S. Department of State, Luciano Poyato, President of Plataforma del Voluntariado de España, Sebastian Mora, Secretary General, Caritas Spain, and Ana Botella, Mayor of Madrid were among the luminaries involved with the Summit.

Prince Felipe inspired the participants at the opening ceremony with his remarks. He said, "I'm certain that this summit that we are opening today can be a turning point leading to greater cooperation between business, government, non-profit organizations with a focus on the welfare of each person and of society as a whole. The sum of efforts indeed multiplies the result."

Summit organizers outlined the main goals and value of the Summit. Ambassador Stuart Holliday, President and CEO of Meridian International Center said, "This summit will lead to greater cooperation between service leaders and volunteer leaders here in Spain and the U.S. Our aim is that participants connect and come forward with specifics that will help strengthen the exchange

between our countries in the area of service and volunteering. At the same time, we hope the ideas they generate here will make a tangible difference in their communities.”

U.S. Ambassador to Spain, Alan Solomont said, “Volunteering and citizen service add to our ability to address really difficult problems together and also teach important lessons about citizenship and responsibility. Lives are fundamentally transformed by the experience of serving others. We hope the conversations we have had here not only deepen and enrich our understanding of citizen service, but also generate new ideas for how we can work together to motivate citizens to help address the challenges facing Spain, the United States, and the world.”

Maria Del Pino, President of the Rafael Del Pino Foundation said, “Social generosity is so important that it is absolutely necessary to promote education on these issues. School and University are the places that should foster altruistic feelings. Thus, together, we would achieve higher levels of solidarity and, as a society, we would bridge so many gaps not covered by the government”

Significant Outcomes

Among the important outcomes,

- Madrid joins Cities of Service. Madrid Mayor Ana Botella announced at the Summit that Madrid would become the second international city to join the Cities of Service model established by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg in 2009. More than 100 U.S. cities are already members of Cities of Service, which aims to create a vibrant network of local governments effectively leveraging citizen service to help address pressing local challenges. Last year, London became the first international city to join the coalition. Diahan Billings-Burford, Chief Service Officer for the City of New York, the founding city of Cities of Service, represented New York City at the Summit and presented a video message by Mayor Michael Bloomberg that welcomed Madrid’s participation.
- Cuenta Conmigo volunteerism campaign launched. The Summit launched Cuenta Conmigo, a campaign to promote volunteerism in Spain. The campaign which means “Count on Me,” invites the Spanish people to get involved by visiting cuentaconmigoespana.es to see resources, join the conversation, and submit their own ideas on volunteerism in Spain, and to engage with other people of similar interest from around the world.
- New grant competition for community improvement projects in Spain. To kick off the Cuenta Conmigo campaign, the Summit organizers announced a competition for a community improvement project grant in Spain. Local communities throughout Spain are invited to submit ideas for service projects, and the winning proposal will receive a 10,000 euro grant to realize their project. This competition is based on the idea that the best ideas for service projects most often come from the communities involved, and seeks to empower local citizens to identify and develop the kind of project they would most like to see. Competition rules and deadlines will be posted on the CuentaConmigoEspana.es website, where the winning project will also be announced.
- U.S. Embassy to sponsor Service Project in San Blas on April 20 (Global Youth Service Day). Additionally, the U.S. Ambassador to Spain, Alan Solomont, announced that the U.S. Embassy in Spain will host a service project in the community of San Blas, Spain on April 20 to coincide with Global Youth Service Day. The goal will be to work in partnership with the Spanish residents of San Blas and many of our partners and sponsors to make a tangible difference in a local community.

Continuing the Conversation

The Summit has connected Spanish and America citizen service leaders with their colleagues around the world, delivered concrete results, and generated new ideas for taking volunteerism to the next level. Participants will remain connected to continue this important dialogue both through the ongoing projects in Spain on the CuentaConMigo.es and world-wide via Meridian International Center's [Global Service Leaders online network](#).

The Service Innovation Summit received generous support from a number of sponsors both within Spain and from the U.S. For a full list of sponsoring organizations please see this [link](#).

To view photos from the event visit:

<http://www.facebook.com/madrid.usembassy>

To view interviews with Summit participants visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/USEmbassyMadrid>